

CARTER COURIER

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LETTER FROM THE CONGRESSMAN

Dear Friends,

I greatly enjoyed the opportunity to spend time at home in the 31st District during the Easter and St. Patrick's Day recess. I was fortunate to attend numerous events across the district, including a trip to Fort Hood to tour the hospital and discuss proposed expansions.

Next week in Congress we will be debating H.R. 5501, the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde U.S. Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008. This bill will authorize funding and other strategic plans to help combat several growing epidemics throughout the world. In the past, there have been attempts to include provisions that pursue an international pro-choice agenda in legislation such as this. Should that occur, I am committed to fighting those provisions and ensuring the rights of the unborn are protected.

As always, I thank all of you in the 31st District for the opportunity to serve you in Congress and I look forward to advancing the conservative principles that make Central Texas so great.

Until next week,

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM: FIVE YEARS LATER

This week marks the fifth anniversary of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Over the past five years, Iraq has become a nation that lives in freedom, not fear. The efforts of our men and women in uniform serving in Iraq have made the World and America safer from terrorists.

I have had the opportunity to visit Iraq four times since the beginning of the war. During my visits, I have had the great honor of visiting with our troops from Fort Hood, and I have been able to see first hand the progress we have made. We owe eternal gratitude to the brave men and women fighting for the safety of America and the freedom of the Iraqi people.

Violence has declined throughout Iraq, particularly in Baghdad and al-Anbar Province. Total civilian deaths and coalition deaths have dropped by more than 70% since July of 2007, according to the House Armed Services Committee. Coalition forces have captured or killed thousands of extremists and key al-Qaeda leaders. This major reduction in violence has been made possible by the troop surge and the Sunni rejection of al-Qaeda.

A neighborhood watch program called the "Sons of Iraq" move-

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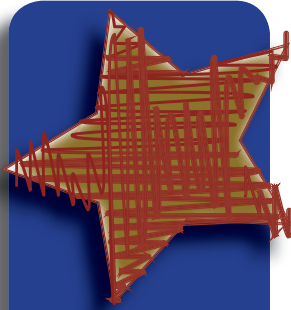
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ment is now 90,000 strong and has been the inspiration for other Iraqis to take up the fight. This neighborhood watch program has helped protect communities from terrorists and insurgents. During the past year, the Iraqi government has added its own surge of 100,000 new Iraqi soldiers and police officers, and the Iraqi government is now responsible for the security in nine of Iraq's 18 provinces. The increase in Iraqi forces has also enabled them to become more capable of executing their own missions.

Political progress is also taking place in Iraq. The Iraqi Council of Representatives and the Presidency Council are working through key pieces of legislation that will balance the central government in Baghdad with the strong local governments. They are also working to pass election laws and legislation that would set the framework for foreign investment in Iraq's energy sector.

While the surge has enabled us to reduce the amount of violence, the stakes in Iraq are still great. We are witnessing the first large scale Arab uprising against Osama bin Laden and his terror network. Defeating al-Qaeda in Iraq will show that we are capable of defending liberty and defeating terrorists.

In the past five years, we have learned that when we pull our forces out too fast terrorists and extremist step in and spread violence. General Petraeus has warned that too quick of a withdrawal could result in a surge in violence again. I believe that we must listen very carefully to our experts on the ground in Iraq and trust that their advice to Congress is in the best interest of America, our troops, and the people of Iraq.

I cannot talk about the success in Iraq without mentioning our troops. Brave American men and women have fought and sacrificed for the freedom of the Iraqi people and the War on Terror. Back home, many families are sacrificing while their loved one serves in Iraq. We should all remember our military families and be thankful for their contribution to our freedom. This has been a long struggle – frankly, longer than many of us realized. But we owe it to the Iraqi people, and to the memory of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, to finish the job. Our military needs to leave Iraq in victory under the American flag, not in defeat under a white flag. I ask that the residents of the 31st District continue to show support for these brave souls by flying your flag, thanking a troop and their family, and letting them know that you stand behind them.

SENIORS AND DISABLED VETERANS SHOULD FILE A 2007 TAX RETURN TO GET STIMULUS CHECK

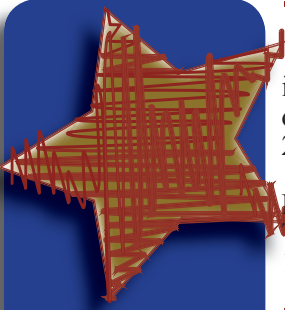
I want to remind local seniors and disabled veterans in the 31st District of Texas that they must file a 2007 tax return in order to receive the recently enacted economic stimulus tax rebate.

This spring, more than 130 million Americans will receive a tax rebate from the federal government as result of the recently enacted economic stimulus bill. According to the new law, an individual or family with at least \$3,000 in income, including Social Security and veteran disability benefits, or that pays at least \$1 in income tax, will receive a rebate check of at least \$300.

In recent weeks, many seniors and veterans that do not regularly file income taxes have contacted my office seeking guidance and assistance on how to properly obtain their tax rebate. I want to remind those residents, including qualified seniors and disabled veterans that would not typically file tax forms with the IRS, they must file a 2007 tax return in order to receive their rebate check.

According to the IRS:

- Those who have already filed a 2007 return reflecting qualifying income of \$3,000 or more do not have any additional filing requirements and do not need to do anything more to receive their payments.
- Those who have already filed a 2007 return showing less than \$3,000 in qualifying income and did not list their Social Security, Railroad Retirement or certain veterans benefits should file a Form 1040X to amend a tax return in order to qualify for stimulus payment.
- Those who are not required to file a 2007 return but whose total qualifying income



including Social Security, certain Railroad Retirement and certain veterans' benefits would equal or exceed \$3,000 should file a return reporting these benefits on Line 14a of Form 1040A or Line 20a of Form 1040 to establish their eligibility.

Free Tax Help is available to help low-and moderate-income taxpayers and elderly taxpayers. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program provides help to these individuals. Call 1-800-906-9877 to locate the nearest VITA site.

DEMS LATEST FISA BILL DEAD ON ARRIVAL IN SENATE

I recently issued the following statement after Democrats pushed through a surveillance bill laden with obstacles that prevent our intelligence community from protecting our country, and gives 4th amendment protections to foreigners and terrorists. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid has already said this bill will be dead upon arrival in the Senate.

"Passing a FISA bill that has no chance of becoming law is highly irresponsible and poses an urgent threat to the security of this country. For six months now, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has refused to permanently close loopholes in our intelligence laws-outdated laws that are leaving our intelligence community blind to terrorist communication abroad.

"Delaying passage of a good intelligence bill has drastically weakened the ability of our intelligence community to access vital foreign intelligence information, including the location, intentions and capabilities of terrorists. Our national security will continue to weaken as long as Congress insists on playing politics with it.

"Keeping America safe from terrorist attacks is not, and never should be, a partisan issue. For the sake of our security, I hope the two-week Easter break will knock some common sense into the Democrat Leadership and they will bring up the bipartisan Senate bill that arms our intelligence community with the tools they need to keep us safe."

THE MAJORITY'S BLOATED BUDGET

I recently made the following statement after House Democrats rejected a budget proposal that balances the budget and keeps taxes low on American families, and instead passed a budget, which includes a \$683 billion tax increase for working families and small business owners, refuses to address the looming crisis in entitlements and increases the deficit for 2009 to \$340 billion.

"By passing this budget today, Democrats are leaving Americans with nothing but empty pockets and a crushed economy. Taxpayers in Texas will carry an extra \$2,100 burden in order to pay for the billions in new government spending the Democrats' budget proposes. The budget is more than numbers on paper. It is a reflection of our national priorities, and the Democrats have shown that their priorities lie not with the taxpayer, but with billions in wasteful government spending."

TEMPLE HOUSING AUTHORITY AWARDED \$62,500 ROSS HUD GRANT

I was proud to recently announce that the Temple Housing Authority has been awarded a \$62,500 Resident Opportunities for Self Sufficiency (ROSS) Resident Service Delivery Models-Elderly Persons with Disabilities (RSE) grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

I am proud to represent the Temple Housing Authority and congratulate them on receiving this grant. As the Representative for Central Texas, I know what a great impact this grant will have on elderly people who wish to live independently. This program will provide assistance and services designed to help elderly people retain their independent living status as long as possible.
